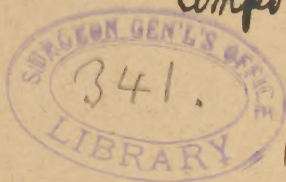


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## AN EXERCISE IN THE EXTEMPORIZATION OF LITTERS FROM RIFLES AND GUNSLINGS.

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FOR a number of years past, the subject of the conveyance of the disabled as an important part of early aid in accidents and emergencies, has been a popular one. The St. John's Ambulance Association in England, the Samaritan Societies in Germany, and still other bodies in other countries, all serving under the Red Cross, have contributed to this end. Foreign armies have long possessed thoroughly organized corps devoted to this work, and now the National Guard of many of our States is provided with an ambulance corps, while the regular army, with its hospital corps supplemented by four "company bearers" from each company, troop, and battery, has a foundation upon which is being erected a system of "first aid" that will be a material advance upon the work already done. In a recent lecture before the Military Service Institution, the writer presented some of the results of a considerable number of experiments as to the best methods of conveying the disabled by human bearers. The well-known method of carrying the disabled upon a litter extemporized from two rifles and their gunslings was particularly pleasing to many, and

a strong desire has since been expressed for a system of movements by which such a litter could be constructed with the least confusion and delay.

In deference to this desire, the following exercise has been devised. Unless otherwise specified, the movements are to be executed in accordance with the authorized United States infantry tactics :

The bearer company or squad being formed in two ranks, with their pieces at "carry arms," the medical officer commands, (1) *Rear open order*, (2) MARCH, which is performed in the usual manner. He then continues, (1) *Front rank, about*, (2) FACE. After this command is executed, he commands, (1) Order, (2) ARMS. The company is now prepared to construct the litters. Accordingly, the medical officer commands, (1) *Prepare*, (2) LITTER.

At *litter*, each man grasps the barrel of his rifle just below the muzzle, and lifts it directly forward until the stock rests upon a point midway between the front and rear rank. Each rear rank man lets its gunsling out to its greatest length ; at the same time, the front rank man frees the upper end of his gunsling entirely from his piece. The rear rank man passes his gunsling over the rifle of the front rank man, and then, with his left hand, grasps the rifle of the front rank man, just below the muzzle ; the front rank man then passes his gunsling about the rifle of the rear rank man, and, drawing it through the upper ring of his own rifle, hooks it at its greatest possible length, and then faces about to the front.

The medical officer then commands, (1) *Carry*, (2) LITTER.

At *litter*, the front rank man stoops and grasps the stocks of the rifles, and arises to an erect posture holding them in his hands, with his arms extended by his side ; at the same time that the front rank man

arises with the stocks, the rear rank man lowers the muzzles until they are held by his side also.

It is now seen that an excellent litter has been formed with the rifles as the side poles, and the interlacing gunslings as the bed. A disabled man should be carried on this litter in a sitting posture, leaning back upon the chest of the rear bearer. To place a patient upon this litter, it should be lowered to the ground in obedience to the command, (1) *Lower*, (2) *LITTER*, and the patient made to sit upon it, facing in the direction of the stocks. It should then be lifted in obedience to the command, (1) *Lift*, (2) *LITTER*.

If it is desired to separate the litter again into its component parts, the medical officer commands, (1) *Order*, (2) *LITTER*.

At *litter*, the front rank man lowers the stocks of the rifles to the ground, and faces to the rear; the rear rank man, retaining his grasp at the same point upon the rifle-barrels, draws the stocks to a point midway between the two ranks, raising the muzzles to the height necessary to hold them easily in front of him.

The medical officer then commands, (1) *Break*, (2) *LITTER*.

At *litter*, the front rank man unhooks his gunsling and removes it from the rifle of the rear rank man, seizes his rifle and withdraws it from the gunsling of the rear rank man. Both bearers fasten their gunslings in the original position and bring their pieces to "order arms." The medical officer then commands, (1) *Carry*, (2) *ARMS*, following with (1) *Front rank, about*, (2) *FACE*, and bringing the company back to its original formation by the command, (1) *Close order*, (2) *MARCH*. The company is then dismissed in the usual way by the commands, (1) *Arms*, (2) *PORT*, and (1) *Break ranks*. (2) *MARCH*.

A litter extemporized in this manner has been



shown by experience to be of the greatest value in the field, where the accessories of litter-bearing are very apt to be deficient or entirely absent. Its construction is equally adapted for any number of men from two to a hundred. A bearer company carrying this variety of extemporized litter may be manœuvred in exactly the same manner as an infantry company in double rank formation. The evolutions are exceedingly effective, and, while not the less useful in actual service, are particularly adapted to exhibition occasions.